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Delegate Filfred welcomes Congressional staff to visit the Bears Ears National Monument



PHOTO: Council Delegate Davis Filfred welcomes U.S. Senator Tom Udall's congressional staff to tour Bears Ears National Monument on April 12, 2017.

BLUFF, Utah – On Wednesday, Council Delegate Davis Filfred (Mexican Water, Aneth, Teecnospos, Tólikan, Red Mesa) welcomed staff from U.S. Sen. Tom Udall's (D – N.M.) office and from the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs to tour the Bears Ears National Monument.

On Dec. 28, former President Barack Obama proclaimed Bears Ears as a national monument under the Antiquities Act of 1906. Since then, several Utah congressional leaders have challenged the national monument designation. Delegate Filfred said he would continue to support the designation and will remain committed to defending the national monument.

"I am very thankful that the senator's office made the commitment to visit Bears Ears National Monument. There has been many efforts to protect Bears Ears and it is very important for them

to personally see the lands that the Navajo, Zuni, Ute, and Hopi tribes are protecting,” stated Delegate Filfred.

On Jan. 5, the Navajo Nation Council’s Naabik’iyátí’ Committee voted 19-0 to approve resolution NABIJA-01-17, supporting the presidential proclamation establishing the Bears Ears National Monument and opposing any congressional action that seeks to reverse the designation that created the national monument.

The federal leaders need to acknowledge and recognize the traditional and cultural significance of Bear Ears, added Delegate Filfred.

Utah Diné Bikéyah, Navajo Nation attorney general Ethel Branch and staff, Navajo Nation Department of Historic Preservation, and members of the Pueblo of Zuni led the Bears Ears National Monument tour.

During the tour, the congressional staff presented a letter dated April 11 to Delegate Filfred that was addressed to President Trump from nine U.S. Senators. The letter urged President Trump to reject calls to rescind the designation of Bear Ears as a national monument, which contains thousands of archeological and Native American sacred sites that are threatened by looting and vandalism.

The tour delegation visited several sites such as the Butler Wash Ruins, Moqi Dugway, Kane Gulch Ranger Station, Cave Tower Ruins, Comb Wash, a Pueblo kiva, and a traditional Navajo male hogan.

“I extend my appreciation for the congressional staff for visiting the Bears Ears National Monument and personally experiencing the beautiful landscape and cultural significance. Bears Ears is spiritually connected to Navajo identity and it’s important for the federal government to acknowledge our cultural and traditional connection this land area,” stated Delegate Filfred.

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